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**Chair of the UK Statistics Authority, Sir Michael Scholar KCB**

David Borrow MP  
House of Commons  
LONDON  
SW1A 0AA

Your ref: *FLYN01006/JC/01091372*

18 December 2009

Dear Mr Borrow

**2011 CENSUS**

Thank you for your letter of 19 November on behalf of your constituents regarding the proposed question about visitors for the 2011 Census.

The primary purpose of the census is to produce accurate population estimates. These will underpin a myriad of important funding and planning decisions during the next decade, at national and local level. The results are used by central government to determine the allocation of billions of pounds of funding to local areas by local government and businesses to plan services and products, and to target expenditure, for example, in schools, libraries, care homes, hospitals, housing and transport.

Everyone is expected to be included in the census where they are usually resident on 27 March 2011. The census is intended to provide a 'snapshot' of the population relevant to census night but, with the complexities of modern living arrangements, it is acknowledged that some people will not be at their usual residence on census night.

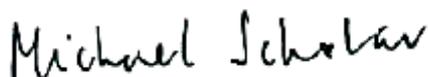
Details of visitors on census night are asked to ensure that people away from home are included in the census, even if they are not recorded on their home questionnaire. To be fully included in resulting population estimates, we need to collect basic demographic information from visitors. This will enable more accurate estimates of the whole population, to facilitate effective planning and funding decisions.

It may be of some reassurance to your constituents to know that some information on overnight visitors has always been collected in the censuses, which as you know go back to 1801.

Detailed further information about the questions for the 2011 Census is available on the website:

<http://www.ons.gov.uk/census/2011-census/2011-census-questionnaire-content/question-and-content-recommendations-for-2011/index.html>

Yours sincerely



**Sir Michael Scholar KCB**